

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 181241Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7802

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 18576

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: US-EC CONSULTATIONS

REF: LONDON 17551

SUMMARY: FCO BELIEVES ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSE CONTACTS WITH INCOMING CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL BE UK'S FIRST PRIORITY AS EC PRESIDENT, AND THAT PRIME MINISTER SHOULD MAKE THIS POINT EXPLICITLY TO HIS EC COLLEAGUES. UK'S POLITICAL DIRECTOR REG HIBBERT REQUESTS EARLY AGREEMENT FOR VISIT TO WASHINGTON WEEK OF FEBRUARY 7. END SUMMARY

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH FCO DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY REG HIBBERT NOVEMBER 17, POLITICAL COUNSELOR RAISED SUBJECT OF US-EC CONSULTATIONS DURING UK PRESIDENCY. THEY REVIEWED MODALITIES ALREADY WORKED OUT
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BETWEEN EMBASSY OFFICERS AND FCO STAFFERS AND EXPRESSED

MUTUAL SATISFACTION AT PROSPECT OF CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP.

2. HIBBERT THEN SAID THAT FCO WAS PREPARING BRIEFING PAPER FOR MINISTERS THAT POSITED AS BRITAIN'S FIRST PRIORITY DURING EC PRESIDENCY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOOD CONTACTS WITH INCOMING CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN ORDER TO GET US-EC RELATIONS OFF TO THE BEST POSSIBLE START AFTER JANUARY 20. FCO INTENDS CALLAGHAN TO MAKE THIS POINT EXPLICITLY TO HIS EC COLLEAGUES AT FORTHCOMING MEETING OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL. HIBBERT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT UK WOULD HAVE TO STRIKE CAREFUL BALANCE IN PRESENTATION TO EC IN ORDER NOT TO RE-AWAKEN SUSPICIONS OF BRITAIN'S RELATIONSHIP TO US, BUT STRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT IN LONG-TERM IMPORTANCE. SUCCESS IN THIS AREA FAR TRANSCENDED QUESTIONS OF FISHING RIGHTS, CAP, AND SUCH.

3. HIBBERT SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO COME TO WASHINGTON AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN LIFE OF NEW ADMINISTRATION TO DISCUSS US-EC CONSULTATIONS, AND SUGGESTED A VISIT DURING WEEK OF FEBRUARY 7. POLITICAL COUNSELOR EXPLAINED THAT TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN OUTGOING AND INCOMING ADMINISTRATIONS WERE STILL IN PRELIMINARY STAGE. BUT AGREED TO FORWARD HIBBERT'S REQUEST.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: SUGGEST DEPARTMENT TAKE NOTE OF HIBBERT'S REQUEST AND AS SOON AS FEASIBLE PROVIDE US POSITIVE RESPONSE OR SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE DATES TO FORWARD TO HIBBERT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS, PRESIDENT ELECT, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON18576
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760430-0911
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761135/aaaabdvi.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 LONDON 17551
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <30 JUL 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-EC CONSULTATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, UK, US, EEC, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006